



DELAWARE FOREST SERVICE

URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM

2026 HAZARDOUS ASH TREE REMOVAL GRANT REQUIREMENTS

*** This year's grant application will be entirely [online](#) ***

GRANT PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To combat the effects of Emerald Ash Borer in the hardest hit communities in the northern part of our state.
- To target hazardous Ash trees.

GRANT RULES

1. Applications are open to municipalities, homeowners associations, maintenance corporations, or certified 501 (c)(3) organizations in **New Castle County only**. Eligible projects must be performed on public lands within the community.
2. Applicants **must** have an Employer Identification Number (EIN) – no payment will be made to individuals.
3. Site visits are **required** before submitting an application. The [Site Visit Request Form](#) can be found on our website at de.gov/delawaretrees.
 - Site visits **must** be scheduled a minimum of a week in advance.
 - Appointments will be made on a first-come, first-served basis.
 - Final day to make an appointment will be February 6, 2026.
 - No site visits will be done after February 13, 2026.
4. Applications for hazard ash tree removal **must** have tree(s) evaluated by a certified arborist and **deemed hazardous** to qualify for funds. Any tree removed must be replaced by the applicant at their own expense. The replaced tree must be shown prior to reimbursement of grant award.
5. Cost estimates must be completed by providing **three** original bids on contractor's company letterhead with certified arborist certification number.
6. Grant requests must be a minimum of \$500 not to exceed \$9,000.
7. All applications **must** be submitted **online**.
 - Applications will open December 5, 2025.
 - Deadline to submit application online is February 27, 2026, by 4:30 p.m.
 - Grant status letters will go out by March 18, 2026
 - Deadline to complete project and submit Grant Summary Report is November 30, 2026.

MATCHING FUNDS

1. Applicants must show how requested funding will be matched in cash or in-kind (volunteer hours).
2. Each U&CF project must **have 100% match in either cash or in-kind of the total project cost**. (Minimum match requirement can be calculated by multiplying by 1).
3. **In-kind service** is the time volunteers donate to the project. Examples of "in-kind" services that can be used are: planting of the trees, watering of the trees, and meetings about the project.
4. Planning and Tree Board meetings must not exceed 25% of in-kind match.
5. Grantees must use the Delaware Forest Service [In-Kind Volunteer Tracker](#) sheet when submitting in-kind match at the end of the project. **No other** match sheets will be accepted.

6. The 2026 volunteer labor rate is **\$34.79** per hour. (Total volunteer hours x \$34.79= In-kind match.)

IMPORTANT NOTES

- If the grant is approved, the Grantee will be required to sign a contract between the Delaware Forest Service and the Grantee which indicates mutual agreement to specific tree work.
- No materials or work may be purchased or performed until the Grantee signs a contract with the Delaware Forest Service. The contract will be provided after the grant is awarded.
- Projects and close out documents not completed by the applicant and received by the Delaware Forest Service before November 30, 2026 will result in loss of grant award and reallocation of funds. **No exceptions.** This is a firm deadline.
- This is a reimbursement grant. Reimbursement will occur after project completion, the Grantee provides proof of paid invoices, matching funds, and a successful audit by the Delaware Forest Service.
- No payments can be made during the month of July due to Delaware State fiscal year close-outs. Please consider this when submitting invoices and match; payments may be delayed if submitted around the month of June.
- Communities may be reimbursed UP TO the awarded amount. (Awarded amount will be stated on the contract. Supporting invoice documents provided at the end of the project will determine total reimbursement amount. Final project cost may differ from proposed project cost.)

RECIPIENTS OF GRANT FUNDS

- Will receive a letter of congratulations and procedural guidelines by March 18, 2026.
- Will sign a contract with the Delaware Forest Service, stipulating that the project will be conducted as specified in the grant application along with any amendments. **No materials or work may be purchased or performed without a signed contract with the Delaware Forest Service.**
- Will be required to submit an updated Online W9 Form to allow your organization to receive grant funds from the State of Delaware. <https://esupplier.erp.delaware.gov> before signing the contract. **Verification must be received from the communities no later than 14 days after receiving the award letter.**
- Press releases, articles, newsletters, signage, etc. must contain the following wording: **Funding for this project was provided by the Delaware Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program.** Failure to use the above statement will result in reallocation of funding and/or repayment of issued funds.
- MUST provide a **7-day notice** prior to project start date. This ensures that a Forest Service representative can be present at the time of the event. Failure to provide 7-day notice can jeopardize the level of funding awarded.
- Will complete the project **and** submit a Summary Report form by November 30, 2026. **No late submission of invoices and summary reports will be accepted. Late paperwork will result in loss of the grant award and reallocation of funds.**
- Closeout documentation must be submitted using the online form. No email submissions will be accepted. The link to the form will be provided at the time of the 7-day notice.
- After closeout documents are provided, an audit will be conducted by the Delaware Forest Service to ensure the project was completed properly and to the scope of work that was on the approved application.
- Will receive approved reimbursement amount upon completion of project, submission of Summary Report and documentation, finalized site plan and passing of the audit.

Any questions regarding the 2026 grant applications process should be directed to:

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